

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the applications:

Listing of Claims

1. (Original) A surgical scalpel assembly, comprising:
 - (a) a handle having at least one attachment element and at least one guide element;
 - (b) a guard, comprising:
 - at least one guide member configured to engage the at least one guide element of the handle such that the guard is movable on the handle between a first position and a second position;
 - a first biased arm having a first boss; and
 - a second movable arm having a second boss; and
 - (c) a blade, comprising:
 - an attachment member configured to engage the attachment element of the handle;
 - a first hole configured to receive the first boss when the blade is connected to the guard and the handle is not attached to the blade; and
 - a second hole configured to receive the second boss when the blade is connected to the guard and the guard is in the first position.
2. (Original) The scalpel assembly of claim 1, wherein the attachment element of the handle comprises an elongated projection extending from the handle and the attachment member of the blade comprises an elongated slot configured to receive the elongated projection.
3. (Original) The scalpel assembly of claim 1, wherein the handle is substantially “C” shaped in cross section.

4. (Original) The scalpel assembly of claim 1, wherein the at least one guide element of the handle comprises opposed grooves.

5. (Original) The scalpel assembly of claim 1, wherein the handle further comprises an unlocking element.

6. (Original) The scalpel assembly of claim 1, wherein the handle comprises a blade carrier extending from the handle, wherein the blade carrier comprises the attachment element and an unlocking element.

7. (Original) The scalpel assembly of claim 1, wherein the handle includes a locking device configured to lock the guard in the second position.

8. (Original) The scalpel assembly of claim 1, wherein the guard includes a blade deflection device configured to bend a rear portion of the blade when the blade is positioned in the guard.

9. (Original) The scalpel assembly of claim 1, wherein the guard includes a blade retention device configured to abut a rear of the blade when the guard is retracted into the handle.

10. (Original) The scalpel assembly of claim 1, wherein the at least one guide member of the guard comprises raised rails.

11. (Original) The scalpel assembly of claim 1, wherein the handle has an open front and the guard is configured to slide from the first position in which the guard covers at least a portion of the blade to the second position in which the guard is at least partly retracted into the handle to expose at least a portion of the blade.

12. (Original) The scalpel assembly of claim 1, wherein the first boss is non-arcuate in cross section.

13. (Original) The scalpel assembly of claim 1, wherein the first boss is quadrilateral in cross section.

14. (Original) The scalpel assembly of claim 1, wherein the second boss is circular in cross section.

15. (Original) The scalpel assembly of claim 1, wherein the first hole of the blade is non-arcuate in shape.

16. (Original) The scalpel assembly of claim 1, wherein the guard includes a blade holding device configured to retain a rear portion of the blade in a deflected position in the guard until the handle is attached.

17. (Amended) A surgical scalpel assembly, comprising:

(a) a handle comprising a blade carrier having a blade attachment element;

(b) a guard, comprising:

a retaining arm having a non-arcuate retaining boss; and

a locking arm having a locking boss; and

(c) a blade, comprising:

a slot configured to engage the attachment element of the blade carrier; ~~and~~

a retaining hole having a non-arcuate shape and configured to engage the retaining boss of the guard; and

a locking hole configured to engage the locking boss.

18. (Cancelled) The scalpel assembly of claim 17, wherein the guard further comprises a locking arm having a locking boss and the blade includes a locking hole configured to engage the locking boss.

19. (Original) The scalpel assembly of claim 17, wherein the handle comprises opposed guide channels and the guard includes rails configured to engage the guard channels such that the guard is slidable into and out of the handle.

20. (Original) The scalpel assembly of claim 17, wherein the guard includes a locking arm having a locking boss and the handle includes a locking device configured to engage the locking boss to lock the guard in a retracted position.

21. (Original) A surgical scalpel assembly, comprising:

(a) a handle, comprising:

a handle body having an attachment element projecting therefrom;

a side wall, a top wall, and a bottom wall defining a handle cavity; and
guide grooves defined in the top wall and bottom wall;

(b) a guard, comprising:

a guard body having a top wall, a bottom wall, and a side wall;

a guide rail projecting from the top and bottom walls of the guard and configured to engage the guide grooves in the handle body such that the guard is slidable into and out of the handle body;

a retaining arm biased inwardly from the guard side wall;

a retaining boss attached to the retaining arm, the retaining boss having a non-arcuate cross section;

a locking arm biased inwardly from the guide side wall, the locking arm comprising a movable arm with a locking boss attached at one end; and

a blade deflection device movably mounted on the guard; and

(c) a blade, comprising:

an elongated attachment slot configured to engage the attachment element of the handle;

a retaining hole configured to engage the retaining boss of the retaining arm; and

a locking hole configured to engage the locking boss of the locking arm.

22. (Cancelled) A surgical scalpel assembly, comprising:

(a) a handle comprising a blade attachment element;

(b) a blade comprising an attachment member configured to engage the attachment element of the handle; and

(c) a guard configured to engage the handle, the guard comprising a blade deflection device.

23. (Cancelled) A surgical scalpel assembly, comprising:

(a) a handle comprising a blade attachment element and a locking device;

(b) a blade, comprising:

an attachment member configured to engage the attachment element of the handle; and

a locking element; and

(c) a guard, comprising:

a locking arm configured to engage the locking element of the blade when the guard is in a first position and configured to engage the locking device of the handle when the guard is in a second position.

24. (Original) A surgical scalpel assembly, comprising:

(a) a handle; and

(b) a blade and guard assembly, comprising:

a guard, including:

a first biased arm having a first boss; and
a second movable arm having a second boss; and
a blade, including:
an attachment member configured to engage the handle;
a first hole configured to receive the first boss when the blade is connected to the guard and the handle is not attached to the blade; and
a second hole configured to receive the second boss when the blade is in the guard.

25. (Amended) A surgical scalpel assembly, comprising:

- (a) a blade having a pair of rear arms each having an engagement member and an attachment member;
- (b) a guard having a pair of engagement elements configured to engage the engagement members of the blade arms to ~~bias the arms outwardly~~ hold the arms in an outward configuration; and
- (c) a handle having a pair of attachment elements configured to engage the attachment members of the blade when the handle is inserted between the blade arms.

26. (Amended) A blade and guard assembly, comprising:

- (a) a guard, including:
 - a first biased arm having a first boss; and
 - a second movable arm having a second boss; and
- (b) a blade, including:
 - an attachment member configured to engage ~~the~~ a handle;
 - a first hole configured to receive the first boss when the blade is connected to the guard and the handle is not attached to the blade; and
 - a second hole configured to receive the second boss when the blade is in the guard.

27. (Original) The blade and guard assembly of claim 26, wherein the guard includes a blade deflection device configured to bend a rear portion of the blade when the blade is positioned in the guard.

28. (Original) The blade and guard assembly of claim 26, wherein the guard includes at least one guide rail.

29. (Original) The blade and guard assembly of claim 26, wherein the first boss is non-arcuate in cross section.

30. (Original) The blade and guard assembly of claim 26, wherein the first boss is quadrilateral in cross section.

31. (Original) The blade and guard assembly of claim 26, wherein the second boss is circular in cross section.

32. (Cancelled) A blade and guard assembly, comprising:
(a) a blade having an attachment member; and
(b) a guard comprising a blade holding device configured to hold a rear portion of the blade in a deflected position in the guard.